



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 2, 1978

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MEMORANDUM

To : INR/DDC - Emerson Brown 2/7  
From : EUR/NE - Ronald E. Wood  
Subject: Swedish Request for Information on the Raoul Wallenberg Case

Swedish Embassy Political Counselor, Mats Berquist, called on me February 1 to pose several questions on this case. I would appreciate your passing these to NSA, CIA and any other appropriate members of the Washington intelligence community. If we have the information requested, I would hope we would be forthcoming in sharing it with the Swedes, in view of the political and humanitarian considerations involved.

Background

Raoul Wallenberg (not related to the industrial Wallenbergs) was a Swedish diplomat in Budapest during the second World War. In that capacity, he was instrumental in saving the lives of thousands of Jews, by issuing them Swedish passports which allowed them to escape Hungary. The Russians arrested Wallenberg when they took Budapest. His status and whereabouts has been an issue in Swedish/Soviet relations since.

The Soviets informed the Swedish Government in 1955 that Wallenberg had died in a Moscow prison in 1947, blamed this on the excesses of Beria and expressed official regret. Reoccurring reports have surfaced since 1955, however, that Wallenberg was still alive in one or another Russian prison. One of these reports was in testimony before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee on February 1-2, 1973, during hearings on USSR labor farms. Abraham Shiffrin, a former Soviet citizen who now lives in Israel, testified that he had met Wallenberg in the 1960's at a Soviet prison camp on Wrangel Island, north of the Bering Sound, between Siberia and Alaska. This report was corroborated in a letter by a former KGB official named Jafim Mishinski, also known as Kozlov.

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This letter was published with the text of the Hearings. Swedish security officials have interviewed both Shifrins and Mishinski in Israel.

A more recent report was included in a story in the December 19th issue of the New York Magazine (pg. 45). This alleges that Wallenberg was alive in a Soviet mental hospital as of three years ago. Were he still alive, Wallenberg would now be seventy years of age.

The Wallenberg case is still of considerable political and humanitarian interest. It is kept alive by Wallenberg's mother in Stockholm, as well as by former Hungarian Jews now resident in Sweden, the US, or elsewhere. Senator Frank Church has called Ambassador Wachtmeister within the last two weeks in response to an inquiry from one of his constituents. Swedish Parliamentarians regularly pose questions for Government response in the Riksdag.

The Swedish Government last raised this case with us in January 1974, when Embassy officer Lars Ake Nielsson posed certain questions to Swedish Desk Officer John Owens. According to Bergquist, we were, at that time, unable to confirm or deny the existence of a Soviet prison camp on Wrangel Island. We also indicated that we thought Shifrins' testimony was only "partially incorrect".

Swedish Questions

1. What is our view on veracity of Mishinski's report? After interviewing him the Swedes doubt how much weight to give his comments. He was, for example, unable to identify Wallenberg in photographs.

2. Can we provide information, from satellite photography or other sources, that would confirm or deny the existence of a prison camp on Wrangel Island?

3. Why do we believe that Shifrins' testimony was only partially correct, and do we have a judgment on his specific comments on Wallenberg?

4. Shifrins also mentioned a former US military officer, Alexander Shornik, who he said was also interned on

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Wrangel Island (pages 15-16 of testimony). Do we have independent confirmation on this, or information on Shornik's current status or whereabouts?

5. In the event that we can provide responses to any of the above, which may be used by Sweden publically and which must be held in confidence?

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